Wing H3026.

A 2s gallery pb

Funeral Sermon

FOR

Mrs. ESTHER SAMPSON,

The Late Wife of

Henry Sampſon, Dr. of Phyſick, who Died *Nov.* 24. M.DC Lxxxix.

By *John Howe* Miniſter of the Goſpel.

Publiſhed principally for the uſe of ſuch as languiſh under painful and Chronical Diſeaſes.

LONDON,

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TO

My Worthy Friend

Dr. Henry Sampſon.

SIR,

I Have peruſed the Papers which you ſent me, and find, as far as I can recollect, they contain in them the Subſtance of what was delivered : With no more miſtakes than is uſual, in writing from the mouth of one who is not of the ſloweſt ſpeakers.

Some things beſides, which the limits of the time allow'd not to be ſpoken (having ſome ſhort memorials of them by me) I have added, conceiving they might, alſo, contribute towards the good end you propoſed to your ſelf, in ſo earneſtly deſiring this publication, the aſſiſting of their patience, and their good and placid thoughts of God, who are exercis'd under Long and Languiſhing Diſtempers. The obſervations which your Profeſſion *hath occaſion'd you to make* in the caſes of many others, *hath, I doubt not, let you ſee the need of ſomewhat to this purpoſe; otherwiſe the example*

you have had ſo long before your eyes of ſo calm and compos'd a temper in this excellent relative of yours, *might have made you* leſs apprehenſive *how great an addition a fretful, unquiet ſpirit is, both to the* Sin, *and the* Affliction *of a* Sickly State. *I am ſenſible your own affliction is great in the loſs you now ſuſtain. The relief will be great, and ſuitable; which the forethoughts of that State will afford,* where they neither Marry, nor are given in Marriage, but are as the Angels of God in Heaven. *I am,*

SIR,

In much ſincerity, and affection, yours to ſerve you in the work and labour of the Goſpel,

John Howe.

LUKE

LUKE 13. 16.

And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, *whom Satan hath bound, lo theſe eighteen years, be looſed from this bond, on the Sabbath day?*

YOU will ſoon ſee the occaſion, and connexion of theſe words, by viewing over the whole Paragraph to which they belong, *verſe* 10. *And he was teaching in one of the Synagogues on the Sabbath.* 11. *And behold there was a woman which had a ſpirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wiſe lift up her ſelf.* 12. *When Jeſus ſaw her, he ſaid to her, Woman, thou art looſed from thine infirmity.* 13. *And he laid his hands on her, and immediately ſhe was made ſtraight, and glorified God.* 14. *And the Ruler of the Synagogue anſwered with indignation, becauſe that Jeſus had healed on the Sabbath day, and ſaid unto the people, There are ſix days, in which men ought to work, in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day.* 15. *The Lord then anſwered him, and ſaid, Thou hypocrite, doth not each of you on the Sabbath looſe his Ox and his Aſs from the ſtall, and lead him away to watering?* 16. *And ought not this woman, being a daughter of* Abraham, *whom Satan hath bound, lo theſe eighteen years, be looſed from this bond on the Sabbath day?* 17. *And when he had ſaid theſe things, all his adverſaries were aſhamed; and all the people rejoyced for all the glorious things that were done by him.*

Inaſmuch as our bleſſed Lord ſpake theſe words, and did the thing which occaſion'd them, upon that which was, with the *Jews, their Sabbath day*; it cannot be unfit for us to conſider them *upon ours*, they ſo fitly leading us to conſider alſo, another releaſe wrought *for a daughter of Abraham* too on *our Sabbath day*.

It was formerly told you *upon what occaſion*, and I doubt not but

but you generally know, upon *whose account* we were to divert from our usual course and Subject at this time. Nor could any thing have been more suitable to the present occasion; for not only was this Daughter of *Abraham* releas'd from her Infirmity upon the Sabbath day; but the time, wherein it remain'd upon Her (in a great and manifold complication) was (as her surviving Consort hath acquainted me, and who therefore recommended this Subject) precisely *about eighteen Years.*

There are ('tis true) disagreements between *our case*, and *that case in the Text*, which do not therefore render both together less instructive to us, but the more. And, to make way to what may be so, you must here take notice, that these Words are part of our Lords Defence of what he had done, in performing this work of Mercy, wherein what he says is *justly severe*, and very *clearly convictive.* It is very deserved and just severity, that he call'd him, who cavil'd in the case, by his own true name, *thou hypocrite.* He, under pretence of *great sanctity*, discovers the *highest enmity*, even against our blessed Lord himself, who came (being sent) upon the holiest and kindest design into this World. The zeal which he pretends for the observation of the Sabbath, could not be the thing that he did really mean, or that acted him in this case. For it was not likely he could be ignorant of what was a known adjudg'd Case among the *Jews* (as some of their own Rabbies * inform us) *that all needful endeavours ought to be used for the cure of the sick upon the Sabbath day.* So as that he very well knew, no rule could be broken in this case. But this he reckons was somewhat plausible, and he pleases himself in it, that he could tell how to vent his spite against Christ and Christianity, under a *mock-shew* of great Sanctimony. And our Lord justly calls him what indeed he was, when he would thus seem what he was not. It was not that he cared for Religion, or for any thing of real Sanctity, of which a due and just observation of the Sabbath was a real part; but that he had a mind, as far as conveniently he could, to express his displeasure at that evidence and lustre, wherewith the glorious works our Lord wrought evinc'd him to be

* *Vid. Maimon. constitut. de fundam.* c. 5. 9. *cum Abrav.* N. 13, 14.

And, as our own Dr. *Lightfoot* says upon that question of our Lords; *Is it lawful to heal upon the Sabbath day?* (quoting divers more of theirs to that purpose,) he violated not the Sabbath so much as their own Cannons allow'd. See *his Works*, Vol 2.

be *the Meſſiah*; while yet he was ſtruck with that awe of him, that he adventures not to direct his reproof to *him*, but *the people*.

It is here by the way to be noted that *they* were not thus diſaffected to our Lord, and the Religion he was about to introduce. No, but this Ceremonious Bigot, *a Ruler of the Synagogue*, was the ill-pleaſed, diſaffected Perſon.

I ſhall not trouble you with the diſcuſſion what ſort of power it was that belonged to that Office. Some well acquainted with the *Jewiſh writings* ſay, that the *Ruler of the Synagogue* was not wont himſelf to officiate, as Miniſter *in Sacris*; but his buſineſs was *circa Sacra*, to regulate the Adminiſtration. We conſider not his *Power*, but his *ill-will*, and enmity againſt Chriſt, and true Religion. The people, in the mean time, throng'd after him in Multitudes, and beheld the great works he wrought with joy, and glorified God. Only where was *more power*, and probably *more knowledge*, there was more too of a peeviſh ſpite and envy, that the intereſt of our Lord was, *by ſo proper means*, growing in the World. A ſad (and not a new) thing! that Religion ſhould have moſt oppoſition, whence it ſhould have moſt of countenance, and advantage to dilate and ſpread it ſelf. *Do any of the Rulers believe on him?* But the people (whom they deſpiſed, and pronounc'd *accurſed* for that reaſon) were more apt and forward to receive the Goſpel, *Joh.* 7. 48, 49. *The more there is of light, unaccompany'd with a pious Inclination, the higher, the more intenſe and fervent, the finer and more ſubtle is the venome and malice againſt Chriſt, and real Chriſtianity.*

But our Lord was not diverted from his kind and compaſſionate deſign, by any ſuch obſtructions as theſe. His love triumphs over them; and he makes that diſcovery of his compaſſion, which could not but carry the cleareſt conviction with it, as his reproof carry'd the brighteſt juſtice. Why, what, ſaith he, *Do not any of you looſe an Ox, or an Aſs from the Stall on the Sabbath day? and ſhall not I looſe a daughter of* Abraham? 'Tis like ſhe was *a Daughter of* Abraham, not only as being a *Jeweſs*, but as being a *believer*; as being, according to Scripture language, of *Abrahams Seed*, in the *Spiritual* ſenſe, as well as the *natural*; and he was the more peculiarly compaſſionate upon that account; and yet more, becauſe her ail proceeded from the malignant influence of the Devil. Shall not I looſe ſuch a one whom *Satan* hath bound, that great enemy of mankind?

kind? Why ſhould not I ſhew my ſelf ſo much the more a Friend, by how much the more he appears an Enemy, and give the earlieſt relief the matter can admit?

'Tis very true indeed, his compaſſion was never to incline him to do unfit and unſeaſonable things, or things that were no way ſubſervient to his principal end. But ſuch a ſubſerviency being ſuppoſed, his relief muſt be with the earlieſt, to day, before morrow, though it were the Sabbath day.

And ſo now you have the ground of diſcourſe plainly in view before you.

That the Devil cannot be more maliciouſly intent to afflict thoſe that relate to God (even, when it is in his power, with bodily diſtempers) than our Lord Jeſus is compaſſionately willing to relieve them, without diſtinction of time, when it ſhall be conſiſtent with, and ſubſervient to his higher and greater purpoſes.

In ſpeaking to this, I ſhall

1. Touch briefly upon what is here expreſt in the Text, *the hand that Satan may have in the Afflictions, yea and in the bodily diſtempers of men, and even of them that belong to God among them.*

2. *What hand our Lord Jeſus has in their relief or releaſement.*

3. *How far we may underſtand, or may reaſonably expect his compaſſion to influence him in ſuch caſes.*

4. *I ſhall ſhew that however the releaſe be wrought, it is done very mercifully towards them that belong peculiarly to God. And ſo make uſe of all.*

1. Somewhat briefly as to that firſt query, What hand it is ſuppoſable the Devil may have in the afflictions of men, and more particularly of them that belong to God; as this woman being a Daughter of *Abraham* was to be conſidered, as one within the compaſs of Gods Covenant, and not improbably as one, that, in the ſtricteſt ſenſe, was in Covenant with God.

1. It is plain in the Text, the Devil had a direct hand in her diſtemper, called *a Spirit of infirmity*. There were more evident, and more frequent inſtances of this kind in that time, the Devil *then* ſetting himſelf more openly to contend againſt the incarnate Son of God, upon his more open appearance to reſcue and recover an Apoſtate World from under his Dominion and Tyranny. But as to more ordinary caſes we may further conſider,

2. That

2. That the Devil is a conſtant enemy to mankind, apt and inclin'd, as far as God permits him, to do men all the miſchief he can.

3. That as he firſt introduc't ſin into the World, ſo he hath, by conſequence, all the calamities that afflict it. There had been no Death, Sickneſs, or Diſtemper upon the bodies of men, but from hence. Conſider the Devil therefore, as the Prince and Leader of the Apoſtaſie, who firſt drew man into tranſgreſſion, and thereby render'd him liable to the Juſtice of his Maker, turn'd his Paradiſe into a deſart, and a region of immortal undecaying life, into a Valley of ſickly Languiſhings and death it ſelf; So may he be ſaid to have had a (remoter) hand, in binding not only this Daughter of *Abraham*, but every child of *Adam* in all the Afflictions, Maladies, and Diſtempers which befall them here, and finally in the bonds of Death too, whereof he is ſaid to *have had the power*. Tho the Children of the *ſecond Adam*, (with whom, for this purpoſe he was partaker of Fleſh and Blood, and became with them a *Son of Abraham*, and of his Seed) are, by being ſo bound, releas'd and made free, both from Death, and the bondage of fearing it, to which they were otherwiſe Subject all their days, as we ſhall further ſee anon. *Heb.* 2. 14, 15.

4. Tho God do not ordinarily allow him *more power*, yet we may well ſuppoſe him to have *more malice* againſt *theſe Children of Abraham* (who thereby paſs into the account of his own Children alſo) being more intent upon vexing and afflicting, whom he apprehends or ſuſpects he ſhall never be able finally to deſtroy; and always apt to uſe all the power ſhall be allowed him to this miſchievous purpoſe. We find that the afflictions of the people of God, *in other kinds*, and even in *this kind*, are expreſly, often, attributed to the Devil. In other kinds, *Satan ſhall caſt ſome of you into priſon*, Revel. 2. 10. And divers think *that thorn in the fleſh* which the Apoſtle ſuffered, 2 *Cor.* 12. was ſome acute bodily pain, and he ſays expreſly, it was *a meſſenger of Satan ſent to buffet him*. He, 'tis ſaid, *ſmote* Job with the *tormenting boils* that afflicted him ſo grievouſly, and ſo long, and brought the other calamities upon him that you read of in his Story.

5. And again it is further to be conſidered, that whereas in all Diſeaſes, the Morbifick Matter, whether immediate in Mens Bodies, or remoter in the incompaſſing Air, differs not from other matter, otherwiſe than only in the various diſpoſition, figuration

guration and motion of parts and particles whereof it is made up; inaſmuch as the Devil is called the *Prince of the power of the Air*, we know nothing to the contrary, but that he may frequently ſo modifie that, as that it ſhall have moſt pernicious influences upon the Bodies of Men, and upon thoſe eſpecially, ſo far as God permits, that he has any greater malice againſt.

6. And again, (ſuppoſing this) it is not a ſtranger thing that God ſhould permit him to afflict the Bodies of them that belong to him, than to diſturb their minds. Sure their Bodies are not more Sacred. If we ſhould ſuppoſe that he may ſome way or other perniciouſly agitate the humours in humane Bodies, 'tis no harder a ſuppoſition than that he ſhould ſo variouſly form the images in the fancy, by which he tempts: for herein ſurely he comes nearer us, and is more inward to us.

7ly. Nor is it leſs ſuppoſable that God ſhould, in ſome inſtances. permit the Devils to follow their inclinations in afflicting his people, than wicked men to follow theirs, which, in the general, carry them to the ſame thing; when he knows how to turn the one to after-advantage, as well as the other.

But we have no ground to think, notwithſtanding all this, that the wiſdom and goodneſs of Providence will ordinarily permit that this Agency of the Devil, in the mentioned caſes, ſhould be altogether in a contra-natural way; but only, by ſo moving and acting with natural cauſes, that he may be alſo obviated, through the ordinary bleſſing of God, by natural means, and cauſes too. Much leſs is it reaſonable that diſeaſes ſhould be themſelves reckon'd very *Devils*, as was the opinion of the Gnoſticks of old, wherein they much concurred with the *Manichees*, and whom, together with them, the more honeſt-minded Pagan *Plotinus* ſo copiouſly confutes; (though that that was more anciently a common Opinion, the *Septuagints* rendring the word that ſignifies *Plague* by the word δαιμόνιον, in ſeveral places of Scripture ſeems to intimate. But the commonneſs of ſuch an Opinion in a *dark time*, ſignifies nothing to ſway ours this way or that.)

But whatſoever hand the Devil may be ſuppoſed to have in their afflictions, or ſickneſſes that belong to God, we are in the

2d. place ſure, That our Lord Jeſus has a moſt kind hand (whenſoever it is) in their releaſe, which though it were here

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in a more extraordinary and immediate way, and beſides the courſe of nature; the diſparity in this caſe ſignifies nothing to the leſſening of the favour, towards thoſe whom he vouchſafes to relieve in other caſes; for the influence that he has in ordinary caſes is as truly divine. If the cure of a diſeaſed perſon be wrought by his bleſſing upon ordinary natural means, his cooperating with nature is leſs amazing, but not leſs effectual, or leſs kind; as alſo the efflux from God is (for his own part) as real, when he works with ſecond cauſes, as without them; and as immediately reaches the effect, in both the ſenſes of immediateneſs, whereof ſo much noiſe is made in the Schools.

And we muſt further know our Lord Chriſt is now the univerſal Regent of all Nature, even as he is *the Chriſt*, the world being devolv'd into his hands, and all power being given to him both in Heaven and Earth. *He is Lord of all.* When therefore any of you are ſick, it is by his diſpoſal, if you are recovered out of that ſickneſs. Nor is his Agency leſs or lower, whether it be by bleſſing a Medicine, or working a Miracle. His power and love are the ſame either way. And know, there is an honour, and acknowledgment due from Chriſtians to their great crucifi'd Lord, who hath founded a dominion over this world in his blood, *who died, and revived, and roſe again, that he might be Lord of living and dead.* Therefore you are to reckon you are beholden to Chriſt for all your recoveries, and all your refreſhings that you meet with amidſt the many infirmities and frailties of this your preſent mortal ſtate.

And if the releaſe be by death, as the caſe is, which we now have ſpecially to do with, that univerſal power of his *over all lives*, muſt be underſtood immediately to reach to that caſe too. It is he that meaſures lives, that lengthens them out, and cuts them ſhorter at his own pleaſure. And, as to thoſe that are more peculiarly his own, it is a more peculiar, and favourable ſuperintendency that he has over that affair, even of their very dying. Their death is precious in his ſight. He with a moſt gentle tender hand unties the knot of *Man*, releaſes and receives the diſlodging Soul. *Lord Jeſus receive my Spirit*, as dying *Stephen* ſpeaks. But,

3ly. We are to conſider how far our Lord Jeſus his compaſſion *concerns him* in ſuch caſes; or wherein *that* may move him to interpoſe in them ſo, as in this caſe he did.

And here two things are to be asserted.

1st. That his compassion has not *supream and principal* influence in this Case.

2ly. That yet it hath *real* influence.

That it hath not supream or principal influence in such Cases. And this doth really require to be more principally insisted on, as of greater importance to narrow, terrene minds, that are apt to measure all things *by themselves*, and in reference to their own little Sphear and compass; and *to themselves* only in their *present State*, as they are inhabitants of this Minute Spot of Earth; as if all things ought to bend, and yield, to their present convenience, and accommodation *here*; whereupon they wonder when they are sick, and in pain, God doth not presently relieve and ease them; and think they should do so, for any Friend or Neighbour, if it were in their Power.

Know, therefore, 'twas not from compassion, as the *solitary*, or as the *chief* inducement, that our Lord did work this release for this Daughter of *Abraham*. That cannot be supposed. For he can never be understood to make *a creature*, and the advantages of a Creature his *Supream* end. That would have been to invert the order of things, to dethrone God, and deifie man, and had been, it self, a real sort of that Idolatry, which was one, among the many horrid evils, which he purposely came to redress, and give remedy to in this apostate degenerate World. He had a greater inducement, *i. e.* That he might diffuse the Glory of God among the Children of Men; and that he might give evidence thereby, to the Truth of his own Mission, and prove most convincingly, that he was the *Messiah*, the *Son of God*, the very Person that was anointed, and sent about that great undertaking, to recover Gods rights in this lapsed World, to bring about a reconciliation between God and Men. And upon this account, when he wrought cures upon mens Bodies, it was out of an higher compassion to their Souls.

And tho' even this it self of saving Mens Souls was not his highest design, but the *Glory of God* (as we shall see further by and by) yet it being *truly* design'd by him, and *more principally* than their bodily ease and relief, *this* was an apt means to this his lower end. For, whereas, in order to this, he was to manifest himself a *Divine Saviour*, 'twas requisite he should

ſhould give a joint, and an equal demonſtration of the two things, which his being ſo implies, his *Godlike Power, and Love.* The former *alone* it did not ſerve his purpoſe to ſhew, which he might have ſhewn as much by inflicting plagues on mens bodies, as working cures, by ſtriking them with blindneſs, lameneſs, *&c.* as by giving them ſight and ſoundneſs. But it was neceſſary to his end, his Miracles ſhould be beneficent, and that he ſhould (as it is elſewhere ſaid in the Evangelical Story he did) *go about doing good,* and not make men afraid of him, by ſhewing the Power of a God in deſtructive ſtrokes and judgments; but, (which became a Saviour) expreſs a *divine good-will towards men,* and thereby make his way into their Hearts, bring them to *underſtand,* and *own* a Saviour, and, *as ſuch,* to fall in, and comply with his kind deſign towards them. And this, as it ſerv'd to exalt God in the World, chiefly induc'd him to work this preſent cure. If his compaſſion towards a poor afflicted woman, labouring under bodily infirmity, were his principal inducement, if therefore, ſhe muſt be preſently cured out of hand, even on the Sabbath day, becauſe ſhe had been now bound eighteen years; Why, I pray you, was ſhe to have been bound eighteen years? or why bound at all? His Divine Knowledge of the caſe, and power to have redreſt, or prevented it, had as well ſerv'd his compaſſionate inclination long before. Or why was not ſuch a courſe formerly ſet on foot, and continued in the world, that men might be cured of Blindneſs, Deafneſs, Lameneſs, Feavers, Dropſies, or whatſoever other Maladies, eaſily, and by ſpeaking a word, in any former time? Why was it deferr'd to this time? Or why hath not ſuch a courſe been kept afoot ever ſince his aſcenſion? Hath Heaven render'd him leſs merciful, and compaſſionate? Is it ſo unkind and ill-natur'd a place?

'Tis true that his apology for the cure he now wrought to *this Ruler of the Synagogue,* ſeems to have no higher reference, nor was he bound, unſeaſonably, to declare his utmoſt end and deſign, to a prejudic'd, malicious Enemy. *That* was to *ſpeak it ſelf,* to ſhine by it's own light, and, by ſuch means, and methods as theſe, gradually to make it's own way into leſs-obſtructed minds, inſenſibly ſliding in upon them; which might better be done (time being given at leiſure to conſider things) by the *real evidence* which his works carry'd with them, than

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by induſtrious, and often-repeated *verbal Commentaries and Expoſitions.*

He ſometimes ſpake it out expreſly, as he thought fit, to competent, and more prepared hearers, that his great deſign was to make *himſelf*, and *his errand* be underſtood; *who he was*, and *what he came into the World for*; that he was the *Son of God*, the *promiſed Meſſiah*; and that his buſineſs was *to ſave them that were loſt*; and to reſtore Gods intereſt in an Apoſtate loſt world (whoſe rights were to be cared for in the firſt place. *He redeemed us to God by his blood*, Rev. 5. 9.) Or *for the glory of God*, as he ſumm'd it up, in the caſe of *Lazarus*, when he was told of his being ſick, *Joh.* 11. 4. *This ſickneſs is not unto death* (*i.e.* it was not to terminate in a continuing death) *but for the Glory of God, that the Son of man might be Gloriſi'd*, the ſame account which *this Evangeliſt* gives of all theſe his great works, and why they were recorded, that we *might believe that Jeſus was the Chriſt, the Son of God. &c. chap.* 20. 30. And otherwiſe was it ſo conſiderable a thing, that a man well got out of this fearful gulf, as *Lazarus* now was, ſhould be fetcht back again! that ſo mighty a wonder ſhould be wrought! that the incloſure of the grave ſhould be torn open! and the releaſed Soul ſhould be again drawn down, as a bird eſcaped, caught back into it's former confinement, to converſe a while longer amidſt the impurities of a *world lying in wickedneſs*, and with ſhadows, in a *world the faſhion whereof paſſes away!*

No; Miracles were not *ſo cheap things*. We may obſerve the great and wiſe God hath, for great and weighty reaſons, been always very ſparing in making very obſervable innovations upon Nature, or any conſiderable changes in the ordinary courſe and method of Natural Cauſes, and their Operations; as a thing leſs ſuitable to *a ſtate of probation*, wherein men were to be held in this world. And hath only been wont to do it, where the inconvenience was to be ballanced by preponderating greater reaſons; which might as much require that he ſhould depart from the fixed rule *ſometimes*, as other reaſons might, that he ſhould *not do it often*. It was equally neceſſary that miracles ſhould not be common, as that there ſhould be any wrought at all, and in great part for the ſame reaſon. For if they were common, they muſt loſe the only deſign, for which they could be at all uſeful. If God ſhould do, in this kind, what is *not neceſſary*, he ſhould the leſs effect by

by it *that which is.* Inaſmuch as they are only uſeful, as they are ſtrange, and, in the natural way, unaccountable. But there is nothing ſo great in this kind, but ceaſes to be thought ſtrange, if it be common. Otherwiſe, is not the *forming of the eye, in itſelf* as great a thing, as to give ſight to the blind? Or the framing ſuch a world as this, as great a thing, as the moſt ſtupendous miracle that ever was wrought in it?

It was indeed neceſſary ſomewhat extraordinary ſhould at firſt be done to demonſtrate *that man*, Jeſus of *Nazareth*, to be *the Son of God*, which it was impoſſible ſhould otherwiſe be known. When that was fully done, it was not neceſſary there ſhould ſtill be a repetition of miracles, from age to age, to prove the former were wrought, or the truth of the narratives, which reported them. *That* was ſufficiently to be known in the ordinary way, as other matters of fact are, or other hiſtory, about which there is no doubt made among men. And the hiſtory of *theſe things* has greater advantages to recommend it to the certain belief of after time, than moſt that ever were writ beſides, upon many accounts. It was indeed moſt becoming the Majeſty, Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God (taken together) to do what might anſwer the real neceſſities of men whom he was deſigning to ſave; but not to indulge their curioſity, nor their unaccountable dulneſs, ſloth, or prejudice, whereby they may be unapt to enquire about, or receive plain things.

Therefore miracles were to be done, as rarities, ſometimes, not at all times, and at ſuch a time, and upon ſuch an occaſion moſt of all, to notifie, and ſignalize the Redeemer, at his firſt appearance, to draw mens eyes upon him, that they might take notice of him, and demean themſelves towards him accordingly. This was to be done ſufficiently once for all. And the *great ſtupidity* of the world made a matter which needed *ſome* ſupernatural evidence, need *ſo much* in that kind. *Except you ſee ſigns and wonders, you will not believe.* And if he did ſo far comply with the neceſſity of degenerate humanity, as to give *once* ſome ſignal convictive evidence that he was the Chriſt, the divine Wiſdom would take care it ſhould not be ſo *often done*, as to become trivial, and inſignificant to it's proper end; the importance whereof was ſuch, as that it ought to *tranſcend* any regard to the welfare of mens bodies; but not to *exclude* it; which we now come briefly to ſhew in the next place. *viz.*

2. That

2. That tho' compaſſion towards an infirm creature, under bodily diſtemper, was not the *principal inducement* unto this cure, it was a *real one*. Our Lord doth really compaſſionate the frailties of thoſe that relate to him, while they dwell in mortal fleſh. *He himſelf bears our ſickneſſes.* He has a tenderneſs towards them, even while he doth not think it fit actually to releaſe, and ſet them free; which makes way to what was propoſed in *the laſt place* to be inſiſted on, as preparatory to the intended uſe.

4. *That in what way ſoever our Lord Jeſus works a releaſe for them that are moſt ſpecially his own, from their bodily diſtempers, he doth it in mercy to them.* He lets their affliction continue upon them in mercy; greater mercy, indeed, than would be in an unſeaſonable deliverance. But when he ſees it a fit ſeaſon to give them a releaſe, that is an unqueſtionable mercy too; tho' it be not in ſuch a way, as appears ſuch to vulgar eyes.

It is more eaſily apprehenſible to be from compaſſion, if he relieves a poor, pained, weak, languiſhing, ſickly creature, by giving renewed ſtrength, and eaſe, and health in this world. But when the releaſe is by death, as in the caſe we have under our farther preſent conſideration, it is hard to perſwade that this is done in mercy; that there is compaſſion in this caſe. There is 'tis true in this a manifeſt diſparity, but not a diſadvantageous one. Is it a leſs thing, to releaſe an holy ſoul from *the body* than from *bodily diſtempers*? It can only be ſo in the opinion of ſuch blind moles of the earth, as the children of men are now generally become. But let the caſe be conſidered according to it's true and real import. Why! a *recovery from ſickneſs* is but *an adjournment of death*; 'tis but death defer'd a while. When there is a releaſe wrought in ſuch a way as this, in which hers was wrought, whom God hath lately taken from amongſt us; here is a cure, *not* only *of one* bodily diſtemper, but *of all*; not only of *actual diſeaſedneſs*, but of the *poſſibility of ever being diſeaſed more*; here is a cure wrought, not only *of infirmity*, but of *death*: for the Saints conquer death by ſuffering it; Yea a cure, not *of death* only, but of *mortality*, of any liableneſs to death, ſo as it can never touch them more; Yea further, not only of *bodily diſeaſes*, but of *Spiritual* too, far worſe, and more grievous than all bodily diſeaſes whatſoever; a cure of blindneſs of mind, deadneſs, and hardneſs of heart, of all indiſpoſitions towards God, his ways, and preſence, towards the moſt ſpiritual duties, and the beſt,

and

and moſt excellent of our enjoyments. The *body of Sin*, and the *mortal body* are both put off together. The impriſoned ſoul is ſet free, and enters upon a ſtate of everlaſting liberty; is *releaſt* from the *bands of death*, of whatſoever kind, and in the higheſt, fulleſt ſenſe, ſhall *reign* in life, *thorough Jeſus Chriſt*. What is the deceaſe of a Saint, but a tranſlation out of a valley of death, a *Golgotha*, a place of Skulls, a region where death reigns, into the region of perfect and everlaſting life? It is not to be called death *ſimply or abſolutely*, but with diminution; 'tis death only *in a certain reſpect*, when in *an higher, and much more conſiderable reſpect*, it is a *birth* rather; *a dying out of one world*, and *a being born* at the ſame time, into another, a much more lightſome, a purer, and more glorious world. The ſoul is cured in a moment, of whatſoever was grievous or afflicting to it, and the body put into a certain way of cure, of being made from an earthly, mean, mortal thing, heavenly, ſpiritual, incorruptible, and immortal; from a *vile*, a *glorious body*, *like Chriſts* own, and by *that power*, *by which he can ſubdue all things to himſelf*, Phil. 3. 21.

And now for Uſe.

I. Learn, *That there is no inconſiſtency in the caſe, that the ſame perſon ſhould be at once the ſubject of long continued bodily affliction, and of divine compaſſion.* Theſe are reconcilable things, ſickly languiſhings, under which one may be *ready to fail*, and *compaſſions that fail not*. This is a *common Theme*; but the *due conſideration* of it is *too little common*. Let it now be conſidered with impartial equity, and with deep ſerioufneſs. Do you think the all-comprehending mind of the Son of God now firſt began to pity this daughter of *Abraham?* While he was not yet aſcended, this attribution is given him; Otherwiſe, no doubt, than as a falſe complement; *Lord thou knoweſt all things*— Since his aſcenſion, we are aſſured he hath *a feeling of our infirmities*, ſo as to be *toucht* with them, a continuing ſympathy, remembring the inconveniences of that ſtate he had paſt thorough (as ſhe once, *non ignara mali* &c.) and is always ready, therefore, to do the part of a faithful and merciful high Prieſt. *Before his deſcent*, we muſt, with equal reaſon, ſuppoſe him to have an *entire proſpect* of the ſad caſe of wretched mortals, in this miſerable world of ours. What elſe *made him deſcend?* And after that he was deſcended,

this mark could not but lye ſtill before the eye of his divine mind? to which *all his works were known from the beginning of the world.* Yet the cure is defer'd, the releaſe is not given till the appointed ſeaſon. When it is the caſe of any of you to be afflicted with long ſickneſs, and to feel the tediouſneſs of a lingering diſeaſe (count upon it that it may be ſo, as 'tis like, it hath been with divers of you;) Do not then permit the matter to the cenſure of an incompetent, partial Judge. If you conſult *fleſh and blood*, if *ſenſe* be to pronounce in the caſe, and give judgment, how hard will it be to perſwade that you are not neglected in your languiſhings, that your groans and faintings are unpity'd; tho' you are ſo plainly told, that *whom the Lord loves he chaſtens?* Are you not ready to ſay, how can this ſtand with being, at the ſame time, the object of divine pity? If he pity me, would he let me lye, and languiſh thus, in ſo miſerable a plight, day after day, and year after year? Yes; theſe things very well agree, and I would fain ſhortly evince to you that they do. Why!

1. His Compaſſion may ſufficiently be Evidenc'd in *another kind*, and by another ſort of inſtances. Sure, it will ſpeak compaſſion, if he frequently viſit his frail infirm creatures, and *by his viſitation preſerve their ſpirits*, if he ſupport them, if he refreſh them, this is grace. *My grace ſhall be ſufficient for thee*, ſaith he to the great Apoſtle, when he refuſed to releaſe him from that *thorn in the fleſh, that meſſenger of Satan that did buffet him.*

2. Beſides, *compaſſion may appear by this kind of diſpenſation it ſelf.* It may not only carry that *with it*, but *in it*, which may ſhew good will. If long continued affliction may be ſuppoſed to *proceed from compaſſion*, it doth much more *conſiſt with it.* It may proceed from compaſſion, and bear the relation to it of an effect to the cauſe. We find it expreſly ſo ſaid in Scripture; and who can ſo truly ſpeak Gods mind as himſelf? *He afflicts in very faithfulneſs*; and, *as many as the Lord loves, he chaſtens, and ſcourges every ſon whom he receives*, *Prov.* 3. 12. quoted, *Heb.* 12. 5, 6. *Rev.* 3. Affliction muſt be the effect of his real, and moſt ſincere good will, and compaſſion, tho' of long continuance, if it be apt, and intended to do you good, in higher, and in greater regards, than thoſe wherein you ſuffer; or if the good your affliction does you, or is fitly deſign'd to do you be of a nobler, and more excellent kind, than that whereof it deprives you, it muſt be underſtood, not only

only to be conſiſtent with kindneſs and good will, but to be produc'd of it. For the ſame principle that intends the end, muſt alſo intend the proper means that ſerve to effect it. Now the *kind of this good* is thus to be eſtimated. You read *Pſal.* 103. 5. *As a father pities his children, ſo the Lord pities them that fear him. As a father.* The relation he is in to them is that of a father to his children. But we muſt underſtand, under what notion, he is ſo related, and we are told, *Heb.* 12. 9, 10. *Furthermore, we have had fathers of our fleſh, which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: Shall we not then much rather be in ſubjection to the father of our ſpirits, and live? For they, verily, for a few days, chaſtened us after their own pleaſure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holineſs.* We have here an account where the relation terminates, and ſee both *the object* of his more ſpecial kindneſs and good will, which accompany the relation, and *the end* of it. He is *the father of their ſpirits*; whence, therefore, we may collect the *object* of that love which goes with the relation muſt be *their ſpirits* alſo; the *end* of it is their *ſpiritual advantage*; *to make them partakers of his own holineſs. His holineſs!*] is a lofty word, and carries the matter high. Underſtanding it ſoberly (as we may be ſure it was meant) it muſt ſignifie the holineſs, which he hath *himſelf* impreſt, and the impreſſion whereof is the lively reſemblance and image of *his own*. And is not this *a good* of a nobler, and more excellent *kind*, than we can loſe by a ſickneſs? better than *the eaſe* of this vile fleſh, that was made out of duſt, and tends thither? The object is *their ſpirits*; for there the kindneſs that belongs to the relation muſt terminate, where the relation terminates. *How much more ſhall we not be ſubject to the father of our ſpirits, and live?* The father of our ſpirits is there contradiſtinguiſht from the fathers of our fleſh. God is not the father of our fleſh; but the father of our ſpirits. He is the Creator of our fleſh too; our fleſh is his *creature*, but not his *off-ſpring*. There muſt be a ſimilitude, and likeneſs of nature between a father and a child, which there is not neceſſarily, between a *maker*, and the *thing made*. In reſpect of our ſpiritual part, we are his off-ſpring, and he is ſo a father to us; both, as the Souls of men in common bear his *natural Image*; and, if they be regenerate, as they bear his *holy Image* too. And the caſe may be ſo, that the ſuffering of our fleſh is neceſſary for the advantage of our ſpirits. Our fleſh may ſuffer ſo, as that the ſpirit ſhall be the

better for it; and then pity it ſelf, compaſſion it ſelf muſt not only *permit*, but *cauſe* and *produce* ſuch a courſe of diſpenſation, as whereby that end ſhall be attained, *the making us partakers of his holineſs*; ſo the Apoſtle ſpeaks of his own caſe: *Though our outward man periſh, yet our inward man is renewed day by day*, 2 Cor. 4. 15. *Though our outward man periſh.* We are compaſs'd about with Deaths that are continually beating down the Walls of this outward man; they are beating upon it, and are likely to infer it's periſhing; and if it periſh, let it periſh, I am not ſollicitous (*q. d.*) about that. If it muſt come down, let it come down; in the midſt of all theſe outward aſſaults, our *inward man* is renewed day by day, gathers a freſh, and increaſing ſtrength, and vigour, whilſt this *outward man* is tending to diſſolution and duſt. And ſeveral ways ſuch continued afflictions upon the outward man, may make for the advantage of the inward man in the beſt kind.

1. As they withdraw, and take off the Mind and Heart from this World; a debaſing and defiling thing, and which transforms the Soul that converſes too much with it, into a Dunghil, fills it with ill ſavour. But what doth all this World ſignifie to a ſickly pained Perſon?

2. As it engages them to be much in Prayer. Nothing is more ſutable, than that an afflicted Life be a Life of much Prayer. *Is any man afflicted, let him pray*, Jam. 5. 13. Much affliction hath a natural aptitude to incline men this way. *In their affliction, they will ſeek me early*, Hoſ. 5. 15. It is a dictate of nature, even when Grace, as yet, hath no poſſeſſion; but which, through Gods bleſſing, may, by this means, help to introduce it. For it urges the Soul Godward, who is the *God of all Grace*; obliges it to converſe with him, whereby ſomewhat better may be gained than is ſought: In their afflictions they will be ſubmiſſive and lye at my feet, ſaith God; they will *ſeek me early*, from whom, otherwiſe, I ſhould never hear, it may be, all their Life long. Oh! that you would underſtand the matter ſo, when God afflicts in ſuch kinds, ſo as his hand touches your very bone and fleſh; this is the deſign of it, to make you pray, to bring you upon your knees, to put you into a ſupplicating poſture, if he can, upon any terms, hear from you, tho' you ſeek him but for bodily eaſe and refreſh-

ing,

ing, it may be a means of the greateſt advantage to you, e're God have done with you, when once he has brought you, by this means to treat; when he has got you into a more tractable diſpoſition, there is hope in the caſe. If thus he *open your ear to Diſcipline, and be to you an interpreter, one of a thouſand, to ſhew you his Righteouſneſs, he may ſeal inſtruction to you, and ſave your Soul from going down to the Pit, having found a ranſom for you*, Job 33. 15. *&c.*

But for thoſe that have a real Intereſt in God, and Union with Chriſt, that which occaſions much Prayer, is likely to be the means of much ſpiritual improvement, and advantage to them.

3. It puts ſeveral ſuitable Graces upon exerciſe, and by being exerciſed they grow. It tries their *Faith*, and improves it. *Faith* is, in ſuch a caſe as this, neceſſarily called forth into act, if there be the principle; and as it *acts*, it *grows*; becomes more and more ſtrong and lively. Their *Patience* is exerciſed by it, and perfected; and that has a great influence upon their univerſal perfection. *Let patience have it's perfect work, that you may be perfect*, Jam. 1. 2, 3, 4. There will be an univerſal languor (as if he ſhould have ſaid) upon your Spirits, if you be impatient; if you cannot ſuffer (as patience is an ability for ſuffering) if you can by no means endure, without tempeſtuous agitations, or ſullen deſpondencies of Spirit. But if *Patience have it's perfect Work*, that will infer an univerſal healthfulneſs, and good habit into your whole Soul.

Their Love to God is, in ſuch a caſe, eminently tried; and improved. *Bleſſed is the man that endures Temptation* (tentative affliction is there meant, as above, *verſ.* 2.) *For when he is tryed, he ſhall receive the Crown of Life, which the Lord hath promiſed to them that love him*, Jam. 1. 12. Which implies *their love* to him is the great thing put upon trial, in that caſe. And it is a great trial of Love to God; a very improvable opportunity of diſcerning it's ſincerity, when, upon a long affliction, you can appeal to God, and ſay, *Thou knoweſt I love thee*; tho' thou ſmite and kill, I will ſtill love thee. No diſcontentful motion, no repining thought ſhall ever be allowed a place in my breaſt; there may be ſighs, but no murmurings; groans, but no tumults, nothing of diſpleaſure againſt thy Holy Pleaſure.

4. It

4. It occaſions ſuch to live much upon the borders of Eternity. Under affliction we *look not to the things that are ſeen and Temporal, but to the things that are unſeen and Eternal*, which make us count our affliction, *tho' long*, but *momentany*, 2 Cor. 4. 17, 18. And thoſe Souls will proſper, and flouriſh that have ſo unſpeakably more to do with the other World than with this. 'Tis in this way, that the afflictions of this preſent ſtate *do work for us the far more exceeding, and eternal weight of Glory*, ver. 17. as they direct our eye forward, *while we look*, ver. 18. *not to the things which are ſeen, which are but temporal; but to the things, which are unſeen, and eternal.* Life and Spirit, ſtrength and vigour enter (*q. d.*) at our eye, which is prompted by the horrour of frightful ſpectacles in this ſcene of things, to look to another, where all things appear lightſome, pleaſant, and glorious.

There are other conſiderations, whereby you might argue to your ſelves, not only the conſiſtency, but the great ſuitableneſs of an afflicted ſtate in this World, with Gods Favour, Kindneſs, and Compaſſion towards you.

As that *when he is more highly provok'd*, he *threatens not to afflict*, as the heavieſt of penalties. *Why ſhould they be ſmitten any more?* Iſa. 1. 5. *I will no more puniſh your Daughters*, &c. *Hoſ.* 4. 14. Ephraim *is joined to Idols, let him alone*, ver. 17.

That his Covenant obliges him to it, as to them, who are, on ſtricter terms, in Covenant with him, *Chriſts own ſeed* being ſignifi'd by *Davids*, as by *David* is manifeſtly *Chriſt* himſelf, *Pſal.* 89. Where you may ſee how, and after what tenour his Covenant runs, *ver.* 30. 31, 32, 33, 34.

According whereto he himſelf elſewhere acknowledges, that *in very faithfulneſs God had afflicted him*, Pſal. 119. 75.

That, in experience, we are apt to grow remiſs, ſecure and negligent, when all things are externally well with us. And let us but appeal to our ſelves, how much a wakeful temper of Spirit, under affliction, is better than careleſneſs, and vanity of Mind, accompany'd with fleſhly eaſe and pleaſure.

That we can our ſelves eaſily apprehend that it may, not only conſiſt with the tenderneſs of a Parent, to have the wound of a Child ſearch'd, tho' with much pain; but proceed from it.

That

That in heaven our judgment of things will be right and incorrupt, where we ſhall apprehend no cauſe of complaint, that, through many ſickneſſes, diſeaſes, and death it ſelf, our way was made for us thither. And if that ſhall *then* be a *true judgment*, the thing it ſelf muſt be as true *now*. But theſe I haſtily hint, and paſs to ſome further uſe.

2. We may, next, collect, that ſince it is out of doubt, the Devil may have *ſome hand* in our outward affliction, we are concern'd to take ſo much the more care, that he may not have *his end* upon us by it. An hand he may have, and we cannot determine how far; but whether it be more or leſs, great care we are concern'd to take how to fruſtrate his deſign. He has the moſt miſchievous ends that can be, and deſigns worſe things to us than the affliction, which is the means, whatſoever that be. He would fain engage us in a controverſie with God; would have us contend with him, murmur, fret, blaſpheme and curſe God, and therewith ſend out our laſt, and dying breath. That was his deſign upon *Job*. Let us labour to fruſtrate it, as he did. Divers of the Antients (*Juſtin Martyr*, *Jerome*, *Cyprian* and *Auſtin*) ſpeak much to this purpoſe, how great a deſign the Devil drives in being the Author of ſickneſſes and diſeaſes to men, that he might make them apply themſelves to him, and divert from God, as that wicked Prince did, whom by the Prophet we find ſo ſharply reprov'd for it, as if there were no God in *Iſrael*, that he went to the God of *Ekron* (ſome Dæmon, or other as we have reaſon to think.)

The laſt mentioned of thoſe Authors ſpeaks of it, as juſt matter of Excommunication, when thoſe that bear the name of Chriſtians, ſhall in ſuch caſes, uſe means bearing no natural proportion or accommodateneſs to the end, charms, ſpells, *&c.* for eaſe, or cure of maladies; wherein no relief could reaſonably be expected, but from the Devils agency; who may be officious enough, if, eſpecially, he have firſt hurt, to heal too, that by practiſing upon their bodies, he may entangle their ſouls; and (according to his wont of running counter to God, who wounds that he may the more effectually heal and ſave) by a preſent temporary cure, wound mortally, and finally deſtroy.

He hath not left the world (no, not the Chriſtian world) quite

quite ignorant of his methods in theſe kinds, of training men, by gradual ſteps, into things, firſt, that ſeem innocent, and then into ſuch familiarities (whether their *real diſtreſs*, or their *curioſity*, were the firſt handle he took hold of them by, or the Engine by which he drew them) till, at length, it comes to expreſs covenanting. If the matter come not ſo far, 'tis rare to come off from the leaſt tamperings without a ſcratch. *He that is born of God keeps himſelf, that the evil one may not touch him*, 1 John 5. 18. as knowing he deſigns to touch mortally, and if he touch, to kill. If it proceed ſo far, as a ſolemn league, how tragical conſequences doth ſtory abound with! That of *Count Matiſcon* (pluckt away by the Devil from among divers perſons of quality, whom he was entertaining, and at noon-day, whirl'd in the air three times about the City, in open view of the people, to whom he in vain cried for help) reported by ſome Hiſtorians; and that of an infamous *Magician* of *Saltzburg*, and divers others, are inſtances both very extraordinary, and very monitory.

But as to a future ruine, which he finally aims to involve men in, with himſelf, he hath not faſter hold of any, than thoſe that have learnt to ridicule every thing of this kind, and who have put ſo much *Sadduciſm* into their Creed (conſiſting of ſo many negatives, or things they believe not, that they ſcarce leave enough poſitive to admit that name) as to think *there is no ſuch creature*: perhaps as being conſcious there can be no worſe than themſelves. But how near is he to them that think him out of the Univerſe!

3. Since it is poſſible the Devil may bind even thoſe *that belong to God*, with ſome kind of bodily affliction or other; it is the more to be apprehended, how much worſe bonds they are, in which he binds thoſe *that do not belong to him*. Oh! that you would be ſerious here! How many ſuch ſad caſes are there, amongſt even them, as may be feared, that are called Chriſtians, concerning which it may be ſaid, here is a ſoul that Satan hath bound, not *eighteen*, but, it may be, thirty, forty, fifty years! Oh! when ſhall this ſoul be releaſt, that Satan hath ſo long bound!

4. As from the Devils malice to the bodies of men we may collect his greater malice to their Souls; So we may judg

judg proportionably of Chriſts compaſſions; that as they incline him to give them all ſutable relief in their bodily afflictions, as far as can conſiſt with thoſe meaſures, which infinite wiſdom hath pitcht upon, for the government of this preſent world, and as ſhall fall in with the deſign of his office of a Redeemer and Saviour to us; So they much more incline him to relieve embondag'd ſouls; for *this* doth moſt directly fall in with his deſign, and is the proper buſineſs of his office; the other may be only collateral to it, and, as it were to be done *on the by*. He came not into this world to procure, that men might not be ſick, or pained; or be preſently reſtored to health and eaſe. But he came and died, that ſouls might live; to procure for them pardon, reconciliation with God, all needful aſſiſting influences of grace, and eternal life. Of theſe therefore they may be moſt aſſured, if they duly apply themſelves. And ſome encouragement to expect ſo much they may draw even from this inſtance. This infirm woman, in order to bodily cure, *did apply her ſelf to him*. She came after him, as others did, *for this purpoſe*; and did, in a ſort, put herſelf in the way of his healing influence. Now if any of you find your ſouls are yet held by the Devil in worſe bonds, apply your ſelves to the merciful compaſſionate Jeſus, there is hope in the caſe. Oh! will you not ſay ſo much to him for a ſoul in bondage? Lord looſe this poor ſoul of mine, that Satan hath bound for ſo many ſad years. Do but labour to know you are bound, to feel your bonds. Whatſoever there is of prevailing ſin in you, it is a bond, by which the Devil holds your ſouls. *The wicked are held in the cords of their own iniquities.* Prov. 5. 22. And ſins are ſaid to be the works of Satan, from which it is the deſign of the Redeemer to looſe us. *The Son of God was for this purpoſe manifeſted that he might deſtroy* (we read,) it is, *that he might diſſolve the works of the Devil.* q. d. that he might releaſe, and unbind ſouls, that the Devil as yet holds in faſt bonds. And you may find you are ſo bound, when upon ſelf-reflexion you take notice, you are ordinarily reſtrained from what you ſhould do, againſt the light, and conviction of your own minds and judgments; *i. e.* you find, if you reflect, a conviction hath taken place in your conſciences, you ought to love God; but

there is with you no ſuch motion of ſoul, no inclination towards him; you ought, in a ſtated courſe to pray, and pour out your ſoul to him; but you are bound, you cannot offer at it; you have no liberty for it; your terrene inclination, or love to vanity plucks you back; you ought to *walk in the ways of God*, but you are fetterred, you cannot move a foot; you ought to *do the works of God*, but you are manacled, you cannot *ſtir an hand*. Are you ſo bound, and will you not know it? What! never feel your bonds? When once they are felt, you will ſoon begin to cry, and ſupplicate. And if once you ſhall be brought ſeriouſly, and inceſſantly to ſupplicate, it may be hop't the releaſe will follow. Was our Lord ſo compaſſionate towards infirm bodies, in the days of his fleſh in this world; and do we think he, above, is leſs compaſſionate to ſouls? Can it be thought heaven hath altered him to your diſadvantage? Is he leſs kind, benign, and leſs apt to do good, now he is inthroned in glory? Why ſhould you not believe he will give releaſe unto your captiv'd embondaged ſouls, if you implore his help and mercy, with ſeriouſneſs, and inſiſt upon it, and do not give him over. Say to him, *Jeſus, thou Son of God have mercy on me*; for do you not know it is his office. *The Spirit of the Lord was upon him, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and opening of Priſons to them that are bound.* Iſa. 61. 1. What! will you be bound all your days, and never lift up a cry to the great Redeemer and Saviour of Souls to give you releaſe? How deſervedly ſhould theſe bonds end with you in the chains, wherein the Devils themſelves ſhall for ever be bound with you?

5. We may collect, there is an awful regard due to the Sabbath-day. When our Lord juſtifies the cure now wrought on their Sabbath, only on this account, that it was an act of mercy towards a daughter of *Abraham*, by the exception of *ſuch a caſe* he ſtrengthens the *general rule*, and intimates ſo holy a day ſhould not, upon light occaſions, be otherwiſe imploy'd, than for the proper end of it's appointment. Tho' *our day* be not the *ſame*, the *buſineſs* of it, in great part, is; by the *reaſon* given in the *fourth Commandment*, which being plac't among the reſt of thoſe *ten words*, ſo many ways remarkably diſtinguiſht from the other laws given the Jews, and ſignifying that theſe were intended not to them alone, but to mankind, and given upon a reaſon common to man;

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the words alſo not neceſſarily ſignifying more, than there ſhould be *a ſeventh day* kept as ſacred to God, reſerving it to after-ſignifications of his pleaſure to mark out, and ſignalize this or that day, as he ſhould ſee fit. And our Saviour having told us expreſly the *Sabbath was made for man*, (*i. e.* as men, not for *Jews*, as *Jews*) Theſe conſiderations taken together, with many more (not fit to be here mentioned) do challenge a very great regard to the day, which we have cauſe to think it is the will of God we ſhould keep *as our Sabbath*.

6. That there is ſomewhat of priviledge due by gracious vouchſafement and grant to the children of *Abraham*, to *Abrahams* ſeed, *i. e. to ſpeak by Analogy*, to the children of *covenanted Parents*. *Abraham* is conſiderable here, as being *under that notion*, a *father*; whoſoever of you therefore are the children of ſuch, as *were of the faith of Abraham*; and you are now come to that adult ſtate, wherein you are capable of tranſacting with God for your ſelves, and wherein the *tranſitus* is made from minority to maturity; if now you own the God of your fathers; if you will now ſay, My fathers God ſhall be my God; *he keeps mercy for thouſands of them that love him, and keep his commandments. i. e.* if there were a thouſand generations of ſuch (generations being ſpoken of ſo immediately before, *viz. that he would viſit iniquity upon them that hate him, to the third, and fourth generation; but ſhew mercy to them that love him, and keep his commandments, unto a thouſand generations, i. e. to never ſo many*) If you will not when now grown up diſavow your fathers God; if you will avow and own him, and devote your ſelves to him, he will be your God, as well as theirs. Here is now the priviledge due to *Abrahams* children, or to the children of covenanted parents. God has an early preventive intereſt in them, upon which they may lay their claim to him, as their God, if they will but now give up themſelves to him, and ſtand to his covenant. But if you will not do ſo, but ſlight, and reject the God of your Fathers, then your *birth priviledge* can ſignifie nothing to you; then, *think not to ſay with your ſelves, We have Abraham to our father*, in that 3*d.* of *Matthews* Goſpel; for God will never want children; *he is able of ſtones to raiſe up children to Abraham, q. d.* rather ſtones than you. And then indeed, upon a true account, *Abraham* is none of

your father; as our Lord Jeſus tells the *Jews*, If you were *Abrahams* children, you would do the works of *Abraham*. You do ſo and ſo, *thus did not Abraham*. Joh. 8. 39, 40. Pray conſider what *Abraham* was, and how he lived on earth, like an inhabitant of heaven, as an heir of the heavenly Country, his buſineſs was to *ſeek the better country, that is, the heavenly, wherefore God was not aſhamed to be called his God*, as in that 11*th*. to the *Heb*. 16. *ver*. But if you will go from day to day grovelling in the duſt of the earth, *this did not Abraham*. If you will ſpend your lives in the purſuit of vanity and trifles, *this did not Abraham*. There is a great priviledge belonging by Goſpel grant unto the children of covenanted parents, if they do not forfeit it, by neglecting, and practically diſavowing their fathers God.

7. But I further infer hence, that ſince this compaſſion has a *real*, tho' not a *principal* hand in the releaſe that is given to them that belong to God, in whatſoever way they are releaſt, from all their infirmities, and ails, and afflictions in this world; It very much becomes, and much concerns all the children of *Abraham* patiently to wait for it, in Gods own way. Patiently, I ſay, in Gods own way wait for it: The children of *Abraham* ſhall be looſen'd ſooner or later, and in one way or other, tho very long, tho ſo many years bound by ſuch and ſuch afflicting diſtempers.

You have a great inſtance of this kind in that daughter of *Abraham*, whom God hath called away from us. In all that long exerciſe, the main thing ſhe was ever wont to inſiſt upon, was that in all this affliction, ſhe might gain patience ſubmiſſion, and inſtruction. And in her later time, when ſhe drew nearer to eternity, was more in view of it, *that* was the great ſubject wherewith ſhe entertained her ſelf, and was converſant much with ſomewhat more lately written upon that ſubject, as by *Mr. Shower* (now known to moſt of you) and by another Author. And her laſt entertainment, as I have been told, (as to helps from creatures in any ſuch kind) was the repetition of what ſome of you have heard *concerning the Emmanuel*, wherewith ſhe formerly pleaſed her ſelf, as being, 'tis likely much habituated in the temper of her ſpirit *to the thoughts of him*, that having, by agreement with her pious conſort,

ſort, been their *Motto* *, at their firſt coming together, *Emmanuel*, God with us.

* The poſie on their wedding ring.

8. I ſhall only add one inſtruction more, to ſhut up all; that ſince our Lord Jeſus hath ſuch an agency, and even with compaſſion in the releaſe of thoſe, that do belong to him, from their afflicting infirmities, we ſhould all of us labour, with a due and right frame, and diſpoſition of ſpirit to behold any ſuch releaſment. It is a great matter to be able to behold inſtances of that kind, with a right frame of mind, and ſpirit. If one be releaſed by recovery, into eaſe, health, and ſtrength in this world, 'tis eaſily and readily made matter of joy. Is one recovered out of a long and languiſhing ſickneſs, friends and relations behold it with great complacency and gladneſs of heart. But if a Godly friend be releas'd by dying, truly we can hardly make our ſelves believe, that this is a releaſe or ſo valuable a releaſe; ſo much are we under the government of ſenſe, ſo little doth that faith ſignifie with us, or do it's part, that is *the ſubſtance of what we hope for, and the evidence of what we ſee not.* No! This is to go with us for no releaſe. We look only upon the ſenſible, *i. e.* upon the gloomy part of ſuch a diſpenſation, when ſuch a one is gone, releaſt, ſet at liberty, (as a bird out of the cage, or the ſnare) We can hardly tell how to conſider it as a releaſe. We will not be induc'd to apprehend it ſo. There are no diſpoſitions no deportments commonly that ſuit ſuch an apprehenſion. And Oh! how unbecoming and incongruous a thing, when Chriſt is, in that way, about releaſing ſuch a one, to have an holy ſoul juſt upon the confines of a glorious bleſſed eternity, compaſſed about with ſighs, ſobs, tears, and lamentations. How great an incongruity! I have many times thought with my ſelf, the love and kindneſs of friends and relations is very pleaſant in life, but grievous at death. It is indeed *in ſome reſpects*, a very deſirable thing, (if God ſhall vouchſafe it,) to die with ones friends about one. It may be one may need ſome little bodily reliefe, in thoſe laſt hours; beſides that, *ſome proper thoughts* may be ſuggeſted by them, to mingle with ones own. And, if God afford the uſe of reaſon, and ſpeech, and the ſupply of his own ſpirit, one may poſſibly, in this laſt juncture, be a means of ſome good to them. One

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may poſſibly ſay that, that may abide with them, and be of future advantage to them. But, *in other reſpects*, if the related friendly by-ſtanders cannot duly temper themſelves; if they are apter to *receive* or *do* more hurt, than good; if Chriſtians do not labour to ſhew a truly Chriſtian ſpirit, in ſuch a caſe, their preſence has very little eligible in it. And, indeed, the deportment even of thoſe that profeſs Chriſtianity, about their deceaſing godly friends, is ſuch, for the moſt part, as if the foundations of all Religion were ſhaken with them, and as if they had a deſign to ſhake them too, if poſſible, in ſuch with whom they are now to part; as if it were to be called in queſtion, whether what God hath ſaid concerning another world, and the bleſſed ſtate of the innumerable and holy aſſembly above be true or no, or were not doubted to be falſe and a ſolemn fiction, invented to delude mortals here on earth.

It is little conſidered how oppoſite ſuch a temper of Spirit, as commonly appears in us, is to the very deſign of all Chriſtianity. For doth not the whole of Chriſtianity terminate upon Eternity, and upon another State, and World? Now do but conſider the inconſiſtencies that are to be found in this caſe, between the carriage, and temper of many that profeſs Chriſtianity and their very profeſſion it ſelf. They acknowledge, they own, that the deſign of Chriſt's appearing here in this World, and of his dying upon the Croſs, was to *bring us to God*; to *bring the many Sons to Glory*. They grant that this is not to be done all at once, not all in a day; but it is to be done by degrees. Here he takes up one, and there another; leaving others ſtill to tranſmit Religion, and continue it on to the end of time. So far they agree, with our common Lord; and ſeem to approve the divine determinations, in all theſe ſteps of his procedure. But yet for all this, if they might have their own will, Chriſt ſhould not have one to aſcend to him, of thoſe, for whom he died, and himſelf aſcended, to open Heaven for them, and to prepare a place for their reception, as their forerunner, there. I ſay not one to aſcend after him! For they take up with a general approving of this deſign of his. Very well! ſay they, it is fitly ordered, his method is wiſe, and juſt,

juſt, and kind, and let him take them that belong to him, when he thinks fit; only let him excuſe my Family; let him take whom he will, only let him touch no Relation of mine, not my Husband, Wife, Child, Brother, Siſter, take whom he will, but let all mine alone. I agree to all he ſhall do well enough, only let him allow me my exception. But if every one be of this temper and reſolution, for themſelves and theirs, according to this tendency, and courſe of things, he ſhall have none at all to aſcend; none *to bring with him*, when he returns. *Thoſe that are dead in Jeſus, he is to bring with him.* No, he ſhould be ſolitary, and unattended for all them. They, and all their Relations would be immortal upon Earth. How ill doth this agree, and accord with the Chriſtian Scheme and model of things?

But you will ſay, what! would I perſwade you to be indifferent, and not to love, and care for your Relatives, or be unwilling to part with them. No. All that I perſwade to is that there be a mixture in your temper; and ſuch a mixture, as that the prevailing *ingredient* therein, may agree with the ſtronger and weightier *reaſon*. 'Tis not that I would have love extinguiſht among Relatives; but I would have it moderated and ſubdued, to that degree, as to admit of being governed by Superiour, Greater, and Nobler Conſiderations. Do you think Chriſt did expect or deſign, that his Diſciples ſhould not love him. And yet he tells them, *If you loved me, you would rejoice that I ſay, I go to my Father.* And who in all this World could ever have ſuch a loſs, as they of him, dwelling in fleſh among them? Yet, ſays he, if you loved me, you would rejoice, that I ſay, I go to my Father. And when the Apoſtle, viſibly tending towards death, by the prediction given concerning him, *Acts* 21. 13. ſaid to the Diſciples round about him, *What mean you to weep, and to break my Heart? I am ready, not only to be bound, but to die for the Name of Jeſus.* If there had not been a faulty exceſs in the affection they expreſt, certainly he would not have rebuk'd it. He would not have blam'd what he thought not blame-worthy. John 14. 28.

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In ſhort, It were deſirable (if God ſee good) to die amidſt the pleaſant Friends and Relatives, who were not ill-pleaſed that we lived; that living, and dying breath might mingle, and aſcend together in Prayers, and Praiſes to the bleſſed Lord of Heaven and Earth, the God of our Lives. If then, we could part with conſent, a rational, and a joyful conſent.

Otherwiſe, To die with Ceremony! To die amongſt the faſhionable bemoanings, and lamentations, as if we deſpair'd of futurity! One would ſay (with humble ſubmiſſion to the divine pleaſure) Lord! Let me rather die alone! in perfect ſolitude! in ſome unfrequented Wood, or on the top of ſome far remote Mountain! where none might interrupt the ſolemn tranſactions, between thy glorious bleſſed ſelf, and my joyfully departing, ſelf-reſigning Soul!

But in all this, we muſt refer our ſelves to Gods Holy Pleaſure, who will diſpoſe of us, living, and dying, in the beſt, the wiſeſt, and the kindeſt way.

FINIS.